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RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 27 May 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith a copy of the letter addressed to you today by Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (see enclosure). The original letter will be forwarded to your office as soon as received from Islamabad.

I should like to request that the present letter and its enclosure be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 116 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ahmad KAMAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Enclosure

There has been a sharp escalation in violations of the Line of Control in the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir by the Indian side over the past two weeks. Long-range and heavy artillery, helicopter gunships and aircraft are being used in these operations, which have not only targeted Kashmiri freedom fighters in the Kargil area but have also been aimed at positions across the Line of Control in several sectors controlled by Pakistan, causing loss of civilian lives and property. This morning, two Indian fighter aircraft, a MIG-27 and MIG-21, were shot down nearly 15 kilometres inside the Pakistani controlled area in Kashmir. These developments have created an extremely dangerous situation along the Line of Control and seriously undermine peace and security in the region.

We welcome your recent statement urging restraint and calling for a political solution of the Kashmir dispute.

The freedom movement of the Kashmiris has been going on for all of 50 years since the Indian occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. This indigenous struggle is being waged for the right of self-determination promised to them by India and the United Nations. If India has not honoured its commitment and flouted the resolutions of the Security Council, the onus of responsibility must lie squarely on India.

India continues to allege outside interference as a ploy to divert and confuse international opinion against the just cause of the Kashmiris.

You had sent a Personal Envoy to the region last year. You had also spoken with me on this subject by telephone. I had readily welcomed your initiative but India had refused to permit the Personal Envoy to visit New Delhi. This is characteristic of the different approaches of the two countries.

India not only refuses to accept any role by the United Nations in the resolution of the Kashmir dispute but also rejects any third party involvement which could use its good offices and influence with both Islamabad and New Delhi to find a resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. The Indian intransigence is against the global trend for mediated settlement of conflicts and disputes. We must not lose sight of the fact that Kashmir has now become a nuclear flashpoint, and its resolution is absolutely necessary for peace and stability in the region.

I would urge you to give due consideration to this extremely serious matter lest the situation get out of control. India has used its air force in the disputed territory for the first time since the 1971 war. This is a dangerous and unprecedented move. We have exercised the utmost restraint and have not yet ordered our air force to retaliate, but there is a limit to our patience.

My commitment to the peace process is firm. It was at my initiative that Prime Minister Vajpayee visited Pakistan. But the present action of the Indian Government has made the situation highly volatile. It is certainly not in the

interest of world peace; in my view, two nuclear powers should never be in a state of confrontation.

I would urge you to initiate meaningful dialogue between the two countries to defuse the current situation and lead to a peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

The situation requires that the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) be immediately reinforced and activated. You may also consider sending a Special Envoy to the region to help with the efforts to reduce tensions.

Meanwhile, I want to assure you that Pakistan is committed to the restoration of peace and security and has demonstrated its resolve to ensure this objective. We are committed to the Lahore Declaration and the dialogue process with India aimed at resolving all outstanding issues, especially the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir.

(Signed) Muhammad Nawaz SHARIF